

**Wilbraham  
Senior Center Building  
Feasibility Committee  
Report**

**October 2019**

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# Mission Statement

The Board of Selectmen appointed the Senior Center Building Feasibility Committee to evaluate options for the relocation of the Senior Center. The committee was charged with determining future programmatic needs of the Senior Center and the corresponding space needs and to evaluate the feasibility of renovating current town properties, leasing a facility, or building on Town or privately owned land.

## Summary

Currently, the town leases 3,840 sq. ft. at 45B Post Office Park from the Springfield YMCA for \$72,960 annually. After determining appropriate programming and administrative space, it was agreed that between 12,500 and 15,000 sq. ft. of space would be needed with capacity for 100 parking spaces. Beginning in February of 2014, 40 committee meetings were convened and 20 potential sites were reviewed. On September 16, 2019, the Committee unanimously agreed that the location that best meets the needs is the town-owned property behind the current Town Hall at 240 Springfield Street.

The following report reviews the Committee's process and findings that have formed the basis of this recommendation.

Respectfully submitted,

Dennis Lopata, Chairman

Members: Norma Bandarra, Carolyn Brennan, Trant Campbell, Paula Dubord, Gina Kahn, Nick Manolakis, Tom Sullivan

# Feasibility Committee Members

<i>Dennis Lopata</i>	Committee Chairman, Executive Director LifeCare
<i>Norma Bandarra</i>	Wilbraham Resident
<i>Carolyn Brennan</i>	Chairman, Wilbraham Finance Committee
<i>Trant Campbell</i>	Chairman, Wilbraham Council on Aging
<i>Paula Dubord</i>	Director of Elder Affairs
<i>Gina Kahn</i>	Director Safe Schools/Healthy Students, HWRSD Center for Health and Safety
<i>Nicholas Manolakis</i>	Chairman Wilbraham Capital Planning
<i>Thomas Sullivan</i>	Assistant Town Administrator for Budget & Finance

## Feasibility Committee Meeting Dates

<b>1/6/14</b>	<b>6/16/14</b>	<b>11/20/14</b>	<b>6/16/15</b>	<b>3/14/18</b>
<b>2/3/14</b>	<b>6/30/14</b>	<b>1/15/15</b>	<b>9/15/15</b>	<b>11/1/18</b>
<b>2/10/14</b>	<b>9/25/14</b>	<b>1/20/15</b>	<b>9/21/15</b>	<b>11/28/18</b>
<b>3/3/14</b>	<b>10/14/14</b>	<b>2/12/15</b>	<b>3/29/16</b>	<b>4/17/19</b>
<b>3/31/14</b>	<b>10/22/14</b>	<b>3/9/15</b>	<b>5/6/16</b>	<b>6/3/19</b>
<b>4/14/14</b>	<b>10/24/14</b>	<b>4/8/15</b>	<b>6/8/16</b>	<b>9/16/19</b>
<b>5/6/14</b>	<b>11/5/14</b>	<b>4/27/15</b>	<b>7/13/16</b>	<b>9/26/19</b>
<b>6/2/14</b>	<b>11/12/14</b>	<b>5/28/15</b>	<b>1/31/17</b>	

# Feasibility Study

The Senior Center Feasibility Committee fulfilled the first part of its charge by selecting an architectural firm to complete the professional Feasibility Study. The town issued a bid for Request for Qualification (RFQ) for \$30,000. Four firms submitted proposals and three firms were chosen to be interviewed: Dietz & Company, Reinhardt Associates and Catlin & Petrovick Architects. While all three firms were qualified and had some experience building Senior Centers, the committee voted unanimously to select Catlin & Petrovick Architects. An evaluation tool was created to guide the selection process, with the following results:

## **POINT TOTALS FOR FEASIBILITY STUDY AWARD**

Catlin & Petrovick Architects PC	83.4
Reinhardt Associates Inc.	78.6
Dietz & Company Architects Inc.	65.5
Abacus Architects & Planners	0

The team of John Catlin and Michael Petrovick has successfully completed, or has in process, adult community centers site selection, feasibility studies and/or designs for more than 45 communities. Through their experience designing for the elderly, they have gained a thorough understanding of the issues specific to these building types.

References were contacted by a committee member and asked about availability and communication on previous projects. Catlin & Petrovick scored very highly on both, stating communication was never an issue and that John Catlin retained a good relationship with the stakeholders and remained interested in the centers after completion. Highlighted was his ability to learn from each project he has completed and use that in his next one. Mentioned was the value he placed on input

from stakeholders. Also mentioned repeatedly was his aggressiveness with change orders, which were minimal, dealing with issues to stay in budget.

The scope of the Feasibility Study included the following:

- Site evaluation and suitability
- Assessment of space needed
- Preliminary Senior Center design plan
- Cost estimate projection
- Schedule projection for design, development and construction
- Implementation plan for the prescribed scope of project

Once Catlin & Petrovick Associates were awarded the bid, the Committee began meeting to determine what type of building should be pursued – a community center or stand-alone Senior Center. Research included meetings with Town of Wilbraham Recreation Director, School Athletic Director, Harwich Council on Aging Director (which Senior Center is located in Community Center), and a tour of Springfield College Field House. After nearly a year of in-depth discussion, it was agreed that the Committee would focus on a stand-alone Senior Center, as per the charge from the Board of Selectmen.

# **Buildings & Sites Considered by Senior Center Feasibility Committee**

1. Memorial School, 310 Main Street
2. Stony Hill School, 675 Main Street
3. Parcel, 758V Main Street
4. Parcel, 508 Mountain Road
5. Pine School, 88 Stony Hill Road
6. Parcel, 215R Soule Road
7. Ball Field Parcel, Mile Tree School, 621 Main Street
8. Parcel, 601R Main Street
9. Epiphany Church, 20 Highland Street
10. Old Post Office, Crane Park Drive
11. Christ the King Lutheran Church, 758 Main Street
12. Fountain Park, 883 Tinkham Road
13. Spec Pond Lacrosse Field
14. Evangel Assembly Church, 348 Stony Hill Road
15. Parcel, 46 Monson Road
16. Parcel, 179 Main Street
17. Parcel, 188 Stony Hill Road
18. Parcel, 805 Stony Hill Road
19. Parcel, Post Office Park
20. Parcel, 240 Springfield Street

# **Chronological Report**

The search for properties began in June of 2014. With the help of Town of Wilbraham Building Inspector Lance Trevallion, the Committee reviewed several properties that might be suitable. These town and privately owned properties included: Mile Tree ball field; rear of Bennett Turkey Farm; Wilbraham Children's Museum; 548 Mountain Road; 215R Soule Road; 188V Stony Hill Road; rear property of Post Office Park; Memorial School. Concurrently, discussion was held with the Pastor from Evangel Assembly Church on Stony Hill in regards to their planned addition and the possibility of renting space for a Senior Center.

Privately owned property located at 758V Main Street, behind Christ the King Lutheran Church became available. With an attractive location, the Committee added this property to the list to be investigated further.

In January of 2015, the Committee along with Architect John Catlin toured 3 chosen locations: 758V Main Street, Mile Tree Ball Field and the rear of Bennett's Turkey Farm. All three of these properties had complications but of these three Mr. Catlin's professional opinion was to pursue the 758V Main Street property.

A tour of Memorial School was taken in 2015 by Recreation Director, Director of Elder Affairs, Building Inspector and Board of Selectmen member Mr. Russell. The re-use of the property was discussed, with no official outcome.

The Committee was approached by members of the Nature and Cultural Committee that oversees Fountain Park, in regards to locating a new Senior Center on that property. They attended a meeting and spoke on what would need to take place before any new building could occur, including legislative change, as well as changing the usage restrictions.



The Committee met 8 times in the next 7 months. A matrix was created to rate the 3 properties which Fountain Park was the leader, followed by 758V Main Street and Mile Tree Ball Field. In September of 2015, the Friends of Wilbraham Seniors entered into a Purchase and Sales Agreement for 758V Main Street. After a joint meeting with the full committee from the Nature and Cultural Committee, the Feasibility Committee voted to move forward with the property at 758V Main Street.

Meetings continued with architect John Catlin. In May of 2016, the discussion returned to the renovating of existing buildings, specifically Stony Hill School and Memorial School. Mr. Catlin warned that upgrading would be substantial financially. Operational costs on a new building are dramatically less than older buildings. There are no “corridors” in newer designs for Senior Centers, making it a unique building for a specific population.

Conservation specialist and soil biologist Stanley Tenerowicz studied the property at 758V Main Street and determined at last 60% of the property was wetlands. The waterway on the property was deemed a stream, which would fall under the Rivers Act. Mr. Tenerowicz felt a professional flagging of the property would result in the same findings but at a cost of thousands of dollars. The committee voted to take 758V Main Street off the list of potential sites.

Discussions were held for two years with the pastor from Christ the King Lutheran Church in regards to the church’s future and their properties. The Episcopal and Lutheran Church’s merged congregations into one and Paula Dubord, Director of Elder Affairs, met with the pastor and leadership. There were many discussions of selling one of the churches and how the Senior Center would fit into the Main Street property. In March of 2018, it was announced that the pastor was leaving, virtually ending the discussion on selling the church.

The Committee met with the Board of Selectmen in fall of 2016 and inquired about the availability of schools. The School Committee was caught up in turmoil, with the two towns in the regional school district in a legal dispute. There was no clear answer as to whether a school would be available for a future Senior Center.

In January of 2017, Selectmen Bob Russell addressed the Committee in regards to the old Post Office in Crane Park. Two local developers had purchased the property and were offering to build a Senior Center and lease it to the Town. The location in the middle of town was attractive but the lack of parking was a deal ender.

A small group of town officials were asked by Selectmen Russell to tour Memorial School in March of 2018. Among those were the Director of Elder Affairs, Recreation Director, DPW Director, Building Inspector, Maintenance Facilities Director and Town Administrator. This would be the 3<sup>rd</sup> time in 8 years that the building was toured by the Director of Elder Affairs, with the same results. The building was too large for a stand-alone Senior Center and the cost of renovations, according to industry professionals, would exceed cost of new construction.

Local developer Glenn Garvey offered to build to suit a Senior Center in Post Office Park. There were several meetings with Mr. Garvey and his architect. Schematic drawings were presented for a Senior Center design and brought forward at a Committee meeting. Concurrently, Building Inspector Lance Trevallion found plans for a past potential Public Safety Complex to be located behind town hall. Mr. Trevallion walked the property with an environmental engineer and felt the property was buildable and large enough to meet the needs for a Senior Center.

On April 4, 2019, Feasibility Committee members, Architect John Catlin, Building Inspector and DPW Director toured the property behind 240 Springfield Street. The results were positive. The Committee moved forward by asking for a “Request for Determination” (RFD) from the Conservation Commission. Conservation specialist

and soil biologist Stanley Tenerowicz of SweetBay Environmental performed a Wetland Delineation Study which he presented to the Conservation Commission in July, 2019. On August 13, 2019, the Conservation Commission approved the request.

On September 16, 2019, the Chairman of the Feasibility Committee and the Director of Elder Affairs met with the Board of Selectmen, requesting they appoint a “Senior Center Building Committee”.

## **Conclusion**

A new 12,000 – 15,000 sq. ft. Senior Center would meet the current and future needs of Wilbraham residents age 60 and over. The primary use of the building would be for senior and veteran usage, but space would be available for community groups, town departments, town voting and rentable space available for the general public during non-operational hours. With the increase in size of a larger Senior Center, additional operating costs will be needed.

- Weekday daily lunches would return, being provided by Greater Springfield Senior Services, Inc. (GSSSI). The present cost of their meals are \$2/per meal. GSSSI would provide a Meal Site Manager to operate the daily lunches, with no additional cost to the town.
- Additional administrative staff would be needed to accommodate the expected increase in usage of a larger facility. Grant money (Formula Grant, Title III Grant) may be used, as salaries is an allowable expense under their guidelines.
- Rental revenue could be used to offset the operational costs (maintenance personnel, etc.)
- The “Friends of Wilbraham Seniors”, a 5013c non-profit organization, will use the space for fundraisers that will benefit the Senior Center (holiday bazaar’s, dinners, tag sales, etc.).

- Expected energy cost in a new, energy efficient building, is hard to predict.  
Similar new Senior Centers of comparable size :

<b>Town/City</b>	<b>Center Size</b>	<b>Year Built</b>	<b>Annual Utility Costs</b>	<b># Staff</b>	<b>Architect</b>
Walpole	15,000 sq. ft.	2018	\$10,500 (estimate)	4	John Catlin
Wellesley	13,000 sq. ft.	2017	unknown	7	John Catlin
Mashpee	11,000 sq.ft.	2004	\$25,000	6	John Catlin
Westfield	20,000 sq. ft.	2015	\$42,000	5	Dietz Assoc.
Chicopee	21,209 sq. ft.	2014	\$67,451	8	Lifespan Design
Hampden	5,500 sq. ft.	2000	\$10,569	5	John Catlin

# MEMORIAL SCHOOL SUMMARY

## Summary

48,895 sq. ft.

Build in 1950 – 69 years old

Valued at \$3,396,700

No air conditioning

Kitchen & Pantry 2,222 sq. ft. - oversized

Gym/Auditorium 4,800 sq. ft.

Stage additional 1,000 sq. ft.

Asbestos floor tiles

Ceiling tile glues asbestos

25/30 feet tall ceilings problematic for heating/cooling

Restrooms - 23 toilets

Entrance with administrative offices poorly located

Wide corridors 12 feet

No sprinkler system

Heating system – steam, 2 systems, #1 is extremely old covers bulk of the building, #2 5 years old, covers ½ of front classrooms, installed when Cathedral used space. Estimate cost to convert system from steam to hot water baseboard approximately \$2 million

## Needs

12,500-15,000 sq. ft. needed

Efficient LED lighting, heating, cooling

Over age 60 need 3 times or more light to than 20 year old

30% \$1,010,910 (per Mass General Law) renovations exceed 30% of value of building, entire building must be brought up to code

Town's cooling center

600 sq. ft. needed

4,500 sq. ft. needed of dividable space

ADA accessible group toilets/companion toilets  
with open accessible doorways 18 total

Entrance centrally located with minimal  
corridor space to travel

7 feet wide corridors to accommodate walkers/ wheelchairs

Renovation code requires sprinkler system

## **MEMORIAL SCHOOL SUMMARY continued**

Roof – two different roofs, #1 approximately 15 years old, 20 plus years for replacement #2 roof over gymnasium, 3 tab asphalt shingles that will need replacement soon

Windows – replaced 15/20 years ago. Efficiency rating unknown

Driveway and drainage system needs replacing/repairing

### **SENIOR CENTER DESIGN NEEDS**

Reconfiguration of entrance to middle of building

Parking area to replace “playground area”

Extensive remodeling/renovation to make “classrooms” into suitable Senior Center space

### **COSTS**

From Architect John Catlin

“The school is 48,895gsf. It was built in 1950. Any major renovation will require major code upgrades including ADA, power, HVAC, envelope as well as site upgrades to manage storm water and ADA accessibility. In today’s dollars the projected cost would be **\$14,000,000-\$15,000,000**. Our, very preliminary, estimate was not based on a survey of the building. Unless major upgrades were made to meet ADA regulations, electrical code upgrades, energy upgrades, etc. the number could be higher. Further, there would need to be a complete hazardous materials survey and verification that any underground tanks on site have been properly removed. These numbers only include general code upgrades for the building and the renovation for the adult center. Any other final renovations would need to be evaluated and costed.

Two story, new construction is less expensive than a single-story structure – including elevator and stairs. Single-story buildings have twice the foundations, twice the on-grade slab, and twice the roof structure. All of which exceed the cost of a two-stop elevator and stairs. 15 to 20% of the elderly user group have mobility issues. Long hallways are a barrier to this group that is being served by the center. NCOA (National Council on Aging) states that elders should climb 8 to 10 flights of stairs per day for flexibility, strength and endurance.

## **MEMORIAL SCHOOL SUMMARY continued**

The real expense in the case of Memorial School will be the requirement to upgrade the entire building. This issue combined with the lack of energy efficiency are the real barriers to re-purposing the building. It is not the capital cost of renovating, but rather the operational costs over the life of the structure. New, high efficiency structures would greatly reduce the life time operation costs. Our latest buildings use LED lighting, have R-60 roofs with R-40 walls and triple pane energy star window systems. Energy management systems (EMS) running HVAC and lighting.

I have designed over 50 adult centers, I understand the issues involved in these building types. I lecture nationally on this subject. The usual approach most towns take is to put the seniors in an abandoned school or other similar building. Only twice out of the 50 plus adult centers we have designed have the towns ended up using a former building – in both cases, the buildings had a unique layout and/or the adult center was less than 10,000sf.”

# SPRINGFIELD STREET SUMMARY

## Summary

Land behind town hall, 7 acres

Town owned property presently leased  
to country club, used for lawn clippings

Close proximity to Town hall, generator

Wetland study completed by SweetBay Environmental  
and approved by the Conservation Commission

## Costs

\$6-8 million for building

## Income potential

Rent rooms

4,500 sq. ft. multi purpose room available to rent out.

Holden COA	between \$125/hour and \$170/hour
Newburyport COA	between \$100/hour and \$150/hour
Natick COA	between \$50/hour and \$100/hour
Arlington COA	between \$50/hour and \$150/hour
Glastonbury COA	between \$120/hour and \$250/hour

Senior Center dinners/shows

Hampden Senior Center 3 nights of a Murder Mystery dinner show brought in a profit of \$5,300.

Hampden Senior Center dinners with band averages \$400 profit per show.

Friends of Wilbraham Seniors recent spaghetti dinner, \$2,500 profit, held at St. Cecilia's hall

Potential for Craft Fairs, Holiday Bazaars, other fundraisers by Friends of Wilbraham Seniors; Use for town elections

## Needs

12,500 sq. ft.-15,000 sq. ft. with parking for 100/125 cars



